IV

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

A special meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts was held in the office of Coolidge, Shepley, Bulfinch and Abbott, Architects, of Boston, on October 21, 1935. Mr. Moore, Mr. Swartwout and Mr. Coolidge were present.

1. NEW BUILDINGS FOR BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING AND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE: The meeting was called to consider preliminary plans for new buildings for the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and for the Division of Economics, Department of Agriculture, which were submitted by Mr. Louis Simon, Supervising Architect. The plans were approved with the provision in case of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing building that the column screens be retained. By so doing the building will have a monumental character corresponding with the main building--an important consideration as the sides of the building are seen from Fourteenth Street. Also the Commission recommended the retention of the rustication in order to improve the texture of the walls. A report was sent to Mr. Simon. (Exhibit A)

2. MEMORIAL FOR VICKSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK: Under date of October 11, 1935, the following letter was received from Hon. John C. Taylor, a member of the House of Representatives, requesting reconsideration by the Commission of Fine Arts of the design for the proposed memorial at Vicksburg:

Anderson, S. C.,
October 11, 1935.

Mr. H. P. Caemmerer, Secretary,
Commission of Fine Arts,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Caemmerer:

My attention has been called to the fact that the Commission has disapproved the design submitted by the South Carolina U. D. C. organization for a South Carolina monument to be erected in the

Vicksburg National Military Park with the comment that the design is "inappropriate for a memorial as proposed." While it is not my purpose to question the action of the Commission in disapproving this design or their idea in carrying out their artistic program in this as well as other cemeteries and property, it does seem particularly inappropriate that the Commission could not have notified this organization of this disapproval before the monument had been completed except for the inscription.

This organization has spent a considerable sum of money preparing this memorial and were in the process of completing plans for the unveiling when they were notified that the design had been disapproved.

In as much as the Commission has the authority to arbitrarily disapprove such a design for a memorial, it is my hope that they also may take the authority to approve it since the memorial is practically ready for erection.

I would appreciate it very much if you will investigate this matter and advise me if there is anything that can be done under the circumstances.

Yours very sincerely,
(Signed) John C. Taylor.

A letter was also received from Mr. A. E. Demaray, submitting a copy of a letter from the President of the United Daughters of the Confederacy of South Carolina, urging that permission be given to them to erect the memorial in the Vicksburg National Military Park. (Exhibit B)

The design was reconsidered by the Commission but the Commission adhered to its former decision that the design does not meet those reasonable standards of good taste which the National Park Service with the advice of the Commission of Fine Arts is establishing throughout the National Military Cemeteries. Nevertheless the Commission recognized the fact that there may be reasons which constrain the National Park Service to permit the erection of this particular monument at Vicksburg.

The Commission suggested that the National Park Service caution the officials of the cemeteries that designs for unusual monuments should be submitted for approval to the National Park Service prior to execution. A report was sent to Mr. Demaray. (Exhibit B-1) Also a letter was sent to Congressman Taylor (Exhibit B-2)

3. MODELS FOR STATUARY, ROCK CREEK PARKWAY ENTRANCE: On October 22, 1935, an inspection was made at the studio of Mr. Fraser at Westport, Connecticut, of his models for statuary at the entrance to the Rock Creek Parkway. The members present were Mr. Moore, Mr. Swartwout, Mr. Lawrie and Mr. Savage. The models were one-half size in plaster, from which the final carving is to be done. The models were approved. Mr.Kendall was also present. A suggestion by Mr. Fraser that the models be cut in marble for mechanical reasons was disapproved. The Commission adhered to granite. The members discussed with Mr. Fraser various matters connected with the execution of his designs. The models met with unqualified approval and commendation of the members of the Commission. A report was sent to the Director of the National Park Service. (Exhibit C)

4. WIDENING F STREET; PROTEST AGAINST CHANGING SOUTH FRONT OF OLD PATENT OFFICE BUILDING: Under date of October 10, 1935, the following protest was received from the Dupont Circle Citizens Association against remodeling the south side of the old Patent Office Building:

October 10, 1935.

The Fine Arts Commission,
Washington, D. C.

Gentlemen:

I am directed by The Dupont Circle Citizens Association to advise you that at its meeting held October 7, 1935, the following resolution was passed:

WHEREAS it appears that the authorities are planning to remodel the south end of the old Patent Office Building, thereby encroaching upon a dignified structure that has stood for nearly a hundred years;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that The Dupont Circle Citizens Association protests against this remodeling and urges that a proper respect for the past and for the preservation of works of art requires that the old Patent Office Building be kept as it is.

Very truly yours,
(Signed) Woodson P. Houghton,
Secretary.

The Commission considered this matter at the meeting held October 22, calling attention to the action taken as to widening F Street whereby improved traffic conditions will be provided between 8th and 9th Streets; and also to the fact that plans were approved which change the south front of the Patent Office and remove the steps but do not interfere with the portico. A report was sent to Mr. Houghton, Secretary of the Dupont Citizens Association. (Exhibit D)

5. PUBLIC BUILDINGS OUTSIDE OF WASHINGTON: Under date of October 15, 1935, the following letter was received from Mr. I. N. Phelps Stokes, President of the Art Commission of the City of New York, requesting advice as to whether certain plans for public works proposed for New York City must be approved by the Commission of Fine Arts:

October 15, 1935.

Hon. Charles Moore, Chairman
National Commission of Fine Arts,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Moore:

I have long intended writing to ask your advice in connection with a situation which has caused, and is still causing, the Art Commission some anxiety.

As you, of course, realize, a great deal of work is being done here under federal appropriations. Most of this work is submitted to, and passed upon, by the Art Commission, but occasionally the question arises as to whether this work, paid for by the Government, is subject to our jurisdiction. This applies not only to emergency work but to the designs and embellishments of federal buildings - courts, post offices, etc. Although in the case of these buildings and their decorations the designs have usually been submitted to the Art Commission, we are sometimes told that this is done merely as an act of courtesy.

When such buildings and their decorations are approved by the National Commission of Fine Arts their submission to our Commission is probably unnecessary, but I understand from members of the National Commission that this is not always done. May I ask you as to the facts in this matter and also may I ask your advice as to the possibility of securing a ruling under which it would be necessary to procure for future buildings, paintings, or sculpture, paid for by federal funds, approval either from your Commission or ours.

The matter is of special importance at this time as there is some reason to expect that the designs for the very important East River Drive which will eventually skirt the East River front of Manhattan Island from Harlem to the Battery may not be submitted to the Art Commission on the ground that the work is being paid for largely from federal funds. The work of the demolition for this development has already begun.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) I. N. Phelps Stokes,
President.

The Commission considered the matter and a report was sent to Mr. Stokes informing him that the Commission does not have jurisdiction over plans for public buildings outside of Washington unless Congress by specific legislation should require advice regarding a particular project or such advice is requested by the Executive Officer in charge. Also the Commission advised that in their opinion plans for projects for the city of New York to be paid for out of Public Works funds very properly come under jurisdiction of the New York Art Commission. (Exhibit E)

C O P Y

October 24, 1935.

Dear Mr. Simon:

At a meeting held in the office of Coolidge, Shepley, Bulfinch and Abbott, Boston, on October 21, 1935, the Commission of Fine Arts approved the preliminary plans for the new building for the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and for the Division of Economics, Agricultural Department, with the following provisos:

That in the case of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing the column screens be retained. By so doing the building will have a monumental character corresponding to the main building--an important consideration, as the sides of the building are seen from Fourteenth Street. Also the Commission recommend the retention of the rustication in order to improve the texture of the walls.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Hon. Louis Simon, Supervising Architect,
Treasury Department,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT A

C O P Y

October 18, 1935.

Mr. H. P. Caemmerer,
Secretary, Commission of Fine Arts,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Caemmerer:

This Service has received from Congressman John C. Taylor a copy of his letter to you of October 11, concerning the action of the Fine Arts Commission in disapproving the design submitted by the South Carolina Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy for a memorial in the Vicksburg National Military Park.

Congressman Taylor has asked us to assist in getting this situation "straightened out". Also, the Superintendent of the Vicksburg National Military Park has received a letter from the President of the South Carolina Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, a copy of which is enclosed, requesting information as to why the design was considered inappropriate.

Any information which you can give us for use in answering these letters will be appreciated.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) A. E. Demaray,
Acting Director.

EXHIBIT B

C O P Y

Anderson, South Carolina,
October 8, 1935.

Mr. L. G. Heider,
Acting Park Superintendent,
Vicksburg National Military Park,
Vicksburg, Mississippi.

Dear Mr. Heider:

Mrs. I. G. Ball, Chairman, South Carolina Vicksburg Monument Committee, has just forwarded me your letter relative to the monument which the Daughters of the Confederacy of the South Carolina Division propose to erect in Vicksburg to the memory of the South Carolina troops who took part in the battle fought there. In your letter you state that the Commission of Fine Arts considered the design inappropriate for the memorial proposed, and that they therefore disapproved the design.

We regret very much that this decision came after our monument was finished because it has cost our Division a right large amount of money, but I presume it is too late to talk about that now.

I shall appreciate it very much if you will kindly give me some detailed information as to why the design is inappropriate. Perhaps, if we can get this information, perhaps, the fault can be corrected. As it is we do not know how to proceed. This piece of work represents, hard, sacrificial work on the part of the Daughters of the Confederacy of South Carolina, and we would like to know just where our mistake has been made.

Thanking you in advance for any assistance you can render us.

Sincerely yours,

(Mrs. D. S.) Eliza C. Vandiver,
President S. C. Division, U. D. C.

C O P Y

October 24, 1935.

Dear Mr. Demaray:

Your letter of October 18th, concerning the design for the monument proposed for erection by the South Carolina Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy in the Vicksburg National Military Park, has been considered by the Commission of Fine Arts. I am requested to report to you as follows:

The Commission of Fine Arts has already advised the National Park Service that the design for this monument does not meet those reasonable standards of good taste which the National Park Service, with the advice of this Commission, is establishing throughout the National Military Cemeteries. Nevertheless, this Commission readily understands that there may be reasons which constrain the National Park Service to permit the erection of this particular monument at Vicksburg.

This unhappy occurrence leads this Commission to suggest to the National Park Service renewed caution to officials of cemeteries that designs for unusual monuments should be submitted for approval to the National Park Service prior to execution.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) H. P. Caemmerer,
Secretary.

Mr. A. E. Demaray,
Associate Director,
National Park Service,
Department of the Interior,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT B-1

C O P Y

October 25, 1935.

Dear Mr. Taylor:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at a meeting held October 22, 1935, made a report to the National Park Service which is expected to clear away difficulties that pertained to the erection of the monument in the Vicksburg National Military Park. The Commission feel that these difficulties would have been avoided by submission of the design prior to the execution.

With high regards,

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Hon. John C. Taylor, M. C.,

Anderson, South Carolina.

EXHIBIT B-2

C O P Y

October 24, 1935.

Dear Mr. Cammerer:

The members of the Commission of Fine Arts in company with Mr. William Mitchell Kendall, architect of the Arlington Memorial Bridge, inspected the two groups of statuary designed for the entrance to the Rock Creek Parkway. The inspection was made at the studio of Mr. James Earle Fraser, at Westport, Connecticut. The models were one-half size, in plaster, from which the final carving is to be done.

The members discussed with Mr. Fraser various matters connected with the execution of his designs. The models themselves met the unqualified approval and high commendation of the architect and the members of the Commission.

Very respectfully,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Hon. Arno B. Cammerer,
Director, National Park Service,
Interior Department,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT C

C O P Y

October 25, 1935.

My dear Sir:

Replying to your letter of October 10, inclosing the resolution of October 7, 1935, of the Dupont Circle Citizens Association adverse to the changes in the south front of the Old Patent Office Building, I would say that the resolution was presented to the Commission at a meeting held on October 22.

The members of the Commission gave serious consideration at several meetings to changes proposed by the Commissioners of the District of Columbia involved in the very desirable widening of F Street. This widening has been mooted since about 1840.

After disapproving several plans submitted, this Commission approved the one now being carried out, as calculated both to provide better circulation and also to improve the appearance of one of the chief buildings, architecturally, in Washington. In considering this matter, the Commission called into consultation Mr. John Russell Pope, a former member of the Commission, the architect of the Archives Building. The south front of the Patent Office faces, down Eighth Street, the north portico of the Archives Building. Mr. Pope fully concurred with the present members of the Commission in recommending the new plans.

In studying this subject the Commission of Fine Arts gave especial attention to the Old Patent Office as an element in the cross axis of Washington, framed by Seventh and Ninth Streets and extending throughout the old city to the Potomac. That axis this Commission is concerned to maintain and to make a feature in the development of the Capital.

This Commission desire to assure the Dupont Citizens Association that such expressions as the resolution adopted on October 7 are always welcomed both as showing concern for the proper development of Washington and also as affording an opportunity to explain to a representative body of citizens the reasons which form the basis for the Commission's decisions.

Very respectfully, yours,
(Signed) Charles Moore,
Chairman.

Woodson P. Houghton, Esq.,
Secretary, Dupont Circle
Citizens Association,
1331 Eighteenth Street, N. W.,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT D

C O P Y

November 2, 1935.

Dear Mr. Stokes:

Answering your letter of the 15th, which was discussed at a meeting of this Commission held at Mr. Fraser's studio in Westport, October 22:

The National Commission of Fine Arts share the anxiety of the New York Commission over the present situation. The National Commission has no jurisdiction whatever over any Federal building outside of Washington, unless Congress by specific legislation should require advice regarding a particular project or such advice be requested by the Executive Officer in charge. In connection with public buildings in Washington plans, models, sketches and landscape designs must be submitted by the officials to the Commission for advice. It is unusual that such advice is not taken when given.

It is my understanding that while the Federal Government furnishes a portion of the money for other than Federal buildings those buildings are really city buildings and so under your jurisdiction. But courts, post-offices, custom houses, etc. are wholly within the jurisdiction of the Treasury Department, subject only to such influence as the architect may exert on the Department.

Now, in regard to the East River Drive, we suggest that you take the matter up with Hon. Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect of the Treasury--not formally but by a friendly letter, stating your case and asking what the situation is. You know he is an understanding and sympathetic official, bent on getting for the Government the best possible results, all things considered.

Personally I firmly believe that the East River Drive is a New York project and should come under your jurisdiction.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) Charles Moore,
Chairman.

I. N. Phelps Stokes, Esq.,
President, Art Commission
of the City of New York,
New York, N. Y.

EXHIBIT E

V

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD AT ELMSFORD, NEW YORK, OCTOBER 28, 1935

1. STATUARY FOR THE ARLINGTON MEMORIAL BRIDGE: A special meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts was held at the studio of Mr. Leo Friedlander at Elmsford, New York, on Monday, October 28, 1935, to inspect the one-half size models of his sculpture groups for the District of Columbia end of the Arlington Memorial Bridge. Mr. Moore, Mr. Swartwout, Mr. Lawrie, and [redacted] were present, as also was Mr. Kendall.

The Commission highly approved the models and expressed the hope that these statues will be cut in stone and set in place at the earliest possible moment. This feeling was also expressed in connection with the two models by Mr. Fraser for the statues at the entrance to the Rock Creek Parkway near the Lincoln Memorial. A report was sent to the Director of the National Park Service. (Exhibit A)

2. FOUNTAIN AT GREAT ENTRANCE TO ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY: The Commission considered the question of design for the fountain in the niche at the Great Entrance to Arlington National Cemetery. The Commission felt that just as the groups of statuary at the District of Columbia end of the memorial bridge are needed to complete the composition so the fountain is needed to complete the composition on the Virginia side of the bridge.

Mr. Kendall reported that Mr. Weinman was making progress with his design. The Director of the National Park Service was informed accordingly. (Exhibit B)

3. NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS: The Commission decided to meet in Washington on Friday and Saturday, November 22 and 23 instead of November 8 and 9.

C O P Y

October 30, 1935.

Dear Mr. Cammerer:

The Commission of Fine Arts have considered in the studios of the sculptors the groups of Mr. Fraser at Westport, Connecticut, (on October 22) and of Mr. Friedlander at Elmsford, New York, (on October 28). The models were at one-half size. Mr. Fraser's groups were in plaster and therefore are now ready to go to the stone-cutters, who will enlarge them to full size. Mr. Friedlander's are ready to be cast in plaster preparatory to being cut.

The Commission highly approved the models. The sculptors did not know when they would receive notice to complete the work. They understood that funds are provided to make payments due on the completion of the half-size models. Of course their contracts cover all matters but availability of funds.

Will you please let the sculptors and this Commission know as to issuance of orders for completion?

This Commission feel keenly the desirability of having this sculpture placed at the earliest possible moment. It is not mere ornament. It is an essential portion of the whole composition. The need of the four groups is keenly felt now; and if they could be pushed through before the next summer concerts at the Water Gate, they would give pleasure to the tens of thousands who congregate in that area to enjoy the satisfactions which true art gives. It is due to the sculptors to say that their work reaches the standards set by the Lincoln Memorial itself--now regarded at home and abroad as one of the masterpieces of the world.

I know that you feel these things as the Commission do and that you will do all in your power to hasten the completion of the Lincoln Memorial composition.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) Charles Moore,
Chairman.

Hon. Arno B. Cammerer,
Director, National Park Service,
Interior Department,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT A

C O P Y

November 2, 1935.

Hon. Arno B. Cammerer,

Director, National Park Service.

Dear Mr. Cammerer:

On the submission by Mr. Kendall of his plans for the Fountain at the entrance to the Arlington National Cemetery, as directed by the National Park Service, and, further, on Mr. Kendall's statement that he was asking Mr. A. A. Weinman to cooperate with him, as the sculptor, the Commission of Fine Arts suggested to Mr. Kendall that Mr. Weinman be asked to prepare a design for a symbolic figure that would complete the composition that begins with the two Friedlander groups at the entrance to the Arlington Memorial Bridge. Mr. Weinman subsequently conferred with the Commission as to his conception and agreed to submit a design. At the conferences with Mr. Kendall on the Fraser and Friedlander groups, Mr. Kendall reported that Mr. Weinman was making progress.

Very respectfully,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

EXHIBIT B